

4-29-2014

Toward Understanding Changes in Perceptions of Assessment for Student Affairs Professionals: A Case-Study Approach

Pamelyn Klepal Shefman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.library.stonybrook.edu/nyjsa>

Recommended Citation

Shefman, P. K. (2014). Toward Understanding Changes in Perceptions of Assessment for Student Affairs Professionals: A Case-Study Approach. *The New York Journal of Student Affairs*, 14(1). Retrieved from <https://commons.library.stonybrook.edu/nyjsa/vol14/iss1/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Academic Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in The New York Journal of Student Affairs by an authorized editor of Academic Commons. For more information, please contact mona.ramonetti@stonybrook.edu, hu.wang.2@stonybrook.edu.



New York Journal of Student Affairs
Article

Volume 14, Issue 1, 2014

Toward Understanding Changes in Perceptions of Assessment for Student Affairs Professionals: A Case-Study Approach

Pamelyn Klepal Shefman, PhD
Director, Assessment and Planning
Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services
University of Houston

As national and institutional pressures to adopt reporting student success grow, understanding these changes and the impact on our staff is important. This case study looked at a student affairs division at a large urban university in the southwest to better understand the changes of perceptions of assessment. The themes found were that assessment was not to be feared; the student affairs division was contributing to the larger campus voice; assessment was a must have for departments; and good professionals use assessment. The implications toward practice in a culture of assessment and future research directions are discussed.

The current political and economic climate of American higher education has resulted in increased accountability measures that require colleges to demonstrate student learning and success through data-driven assessment. Pressures have shifted from access toward a completion-focused agenda for higher education institutions as demonstrated by the increase in performance-based funding (Hughes, 2012). Appropriate metrics to accurately assess student learning and institutional contributions towards student success are needed immediately. The primary responsibility of improving student learning and success falls at the institutional level (New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability [NLASLA], 2012).

The *Guidelines for Assessment and Accountability* (NLASLA, 2012) outline the principles of effective assessment. These guidelines include setting goals then obtaining, using, and reporting evidence of student learning. Lakos and Phipps (2004) focused on institutional strategies for increasing student success and proposed a “new paradigm of building a culture of assessment, and places it in the framework of organizational culture change” (p. 345). These paradigms for accountability, change, and culture are visible at all levels. It is necessary for all areas within higher education to have and use assessment as an impetus for change, meeting the demands of accountability, and proving relevancy to stakeholders with regards to student learning.

Student affairs divisions, as an explicit area, are not immune to this increased demand for accountability. Prior trends of simple satisfaction surveys are falling out of favor and a move towards more reliable measures of student learning, success, and achievement of institutional goals exists (Schuh, 2009). Although institutionally specific, factors such as degree completion, retention, and time to degree completion have demonstrated student success and achievement (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Sternberg, Penn & Hawkins, 2011). Effectively measuring student affairs’ contributions toward these outcomes can be challenging with student affairs’ focus on outside of the classroom experiences. Furthermore, insufficient explanation of contributions to overall student learning and success at the institutional level occurs when divisions focus solely on individual student development (Shutt, Garrett, Lynch, & Dean, 2012). While understanding the steps taken in the assessment implementation strategy is valuable, this portion of the study examined how the perceptions of assessment changed one university.

Background and Context for the Study

This issue surrounding student affairs being held to the same standards and practices of accountability to demonstrate student learning, success, and achievement that fall to academic affairs is a critical one. At Large Urban University (LUU) the president has made public the priorities and vision that incorporates progress measurements on several key goals (note: institution, departments, and/or division names have been changed in order to protect confidentiality). In fall 2011, the LUU president stated student success must be measured inside and outside of the classroom. Institutional priorities in retention, graduation, and student satisfaction, where both academic and student affairs align, are to be demonstrated through direct

measures. This study capitalized on a unique opportunity for the Student Affairs Division (SAD) at LUU and their contributions assessment toward these priorities.

LUU is located in a large metropolitan area in the southwestern region. Historically a commuter campus, LUU has experienced recent changes and growth directly impacting the campus climate. The growth can be seen through indicators of changes in the student body, facilities, and infrastructures. LUU enrolls over 40,000 students in more than 300 academic areas. Application and enrollment figures have continually increased. There have been new academic buildings, residential halls, and dining areas to accommodate growth. SAD is now being required to measure their unique contribution to student success in this dynamic environment.

SAD has 15 departments and programs providing an array of services, programs, and activities. With over 250 employees, the division oversees residential life (both on- and near-campus), student leadership and activities, and facilities for health, wellness, recreation and counseling. Prior to the study the vice president for SAD, of 20 years, was appointed to a new role and new leadership transitioned. This transition aligned with the university's focus on student success. The new vice president for SAD stated a commitment in response to the call for accountability and progress toward utilizing assessment.

The purpose of this study was to document the perceptions shifts of a student affairs division as they undertook a move toward a culture of assessment. Findings from this study are timely and valuable because they can serve as a useful guide for divisions at other institutions that intend to make assessment a priority. The guiding question for this study was: How have perceptions of assessment changed during this process among employees of SAD at LUU?

Literature Review

Organizational Culture and Cultural Change in Higher Education

The present study is an inquiry of the interaction between culture and organizational changes within the context of higher education and staff perception. Therefore, this review includes a brief discussion of these key concepts. Schein (1999) recognized the importance of culture as a “powerful, latent, and often unconscious set of forces that determine both individual and collective [behavior], ways of perceiving, thought patterns, and values. . . . Cultural elements determine strategy, goals and modes of operating” (p. 14). To understand cultural change, Pettigrew (1979) advocated for the need to establish an understanding of “the concepts of

symbol, language, ideology, belief, ritual, and myth” (p. 580) within the organization.

Organizations as entities have a culture that can be understood by examining these concepts through the inquiry of people and the actions of the organization. Chaffee and Tierney (1988) define culture as a reflection of “what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it. It concerns decisions, actions, and communication both on an instrumental and a symbolic level” (p. 3). This underscores the importance of considering the people or staff of an organization to better understand organizational culture.

From this framework, attention toward understanding organizational culture within the context of higher education is needed. Kuh and Whitt (2000) defined culture

as the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behavior of individuals and groups in an institute of higher education and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus (p. 162).

Therefore, studying an impact on culture within the higher educational context can be done through careful consideration of behaviors and processes and reactions to behaviors (Kuh & Whitt, 2000) centered from the view of the people within this context.

Creating a Culture of Assessment in Student Affairs

Relatively few studies have examined the culture of student affairs, even though there is a strong understanding in providing for the education and holistic development of students beyond the classroom (Astin, 1993). A growing number of departments are now demonstrating their effectiveness to stakeholders through assessment practices. Outcomes-based assessment is recognized as a method to demonstrate student success outcomes and is not wholly new to student affairs. Assessment is defined as “a systematic and critical process that yields information about what programs, services, or functions of a student affairs department or division positively contribute to students’ learning and success and which ones should be improved” (Bresciani, Gardner, & Hickmott, 2009b, p. 16). Bresciani et al. (2009b) continue by defining the process as “improving student success and informing improvements in the practice of student services and programming” (p. 15).

Improvements in the practice of student affairs must consider how the division is effective in providing for student success. This demonstration has begun a shift toward a culture of assessment within student affairs. A “culture of assessment is an organizational environment

in which decisions are based on facts, research, and analysis, and where services are planned and delivered in ways that maximize positive outcomes and impacts for customers and stakeholders” (Lakos & Phipps, 2004, p. 352). A culture of assessment as the environment where practice and decisions are data-centric must be pervasive and threaded into the practice of student affairs. Schuh and Upcraft (2001) addressed assessment and how to utilize and apply assessment in student affairs. Assessment as a cyclical process of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data for use in making changes is often addressed from an application perspective (Bresciani et al., 2009b; Schuh & Upcraft, 2001). A culture of assessment would be evident if these processes were commonplace within a particular division or department.

Oburn (2005) discussed the need to have a culture of evidence for programmatic areas in student affairs within the community college setting. “The need to demonstrate effectiveness in order to remain accredited or receive state funding changed the way community colleges look at student affairs programs and services” (Oburn 2005, p. 19). Understanding these demands and pressures is critical and has challenged processes for student affairs. Chaplot, Johnstone, and Booth (2012) discuss, also from a theoretical perspective, shifting from a culture of evidence to applied inquiry as a way raise student outcomes. They discuss the need to move beyond access to data to an environment where data is utilized as a collaborative, explorative process leveraged toward strengthening student outcomes. Absent from these theoretical discussions on the cultures of evidence and inquiry is an empirical understanding of a campus or divisional application.

In general, the extant research literature has given limited attention to the process of establishing a culture of assessment in student affairs. A study of the conditions at small colleges and universities and student affairs assessment addressed the need to consider the uniqueness of the small college environment (Seagraves & Dean, 2010). They found that the senior student affairs officer’s role had an impact on perceptions and attitudes about assessment. The authors also drew connections between the accreditation processes, the characteristics of small institutions, and assessment processes.

A second qualitative study centered on strategic planning and not assessment specifically. The strategic planning process was reported from members of a Division of Student Affairs staff (Taylor & Matney, 2007). This full-participant perspective reported the model, method, and process for using strategic planning as a useful tool for those interested in student affairs change and strategic planning. Assessment, a piece of the overall process, was mentioned but was not a

focus of the report. According to Taylor and Matney (2007), assessment was required to complete a strategic planning process.

The internal struggle over enhancement of assessment resulted in the creation of a partnership to create assessment plans for co-curricular departments (Olson, Smith, Murray, & Eckstein, 2012). Olson et al. (2012) discussed improving and expanding efforts of assessment from staff member perspectives. Their partnership creation discussed steps undertaken and the influence on assessment efforts however it was not a formal study.

A compilation of institutional case studies that utilized assessment in their student affairs divisions provides a reflection tool on the implementation of assessment (Bresciani et al., 2009a). Bresciani et al. (2009a) requested first-hand accounts of culture, processes of assessment, tips for implementation, and descriptions of any barriers and strategies to overcome them. The intention of case studies was one of reflection and study. There exist limitations as each case chose to share items and the were not empirically driven. Further missing is a clear understanding of any shifts in perceptions about assessment.

Methodology

This qualitative study utilized a case study method with ethnographic foundations. Glense (1999) defines ethnography's primary mode of data collection as utilizing participant observer immersion and interviewing techniques. Wolcott's (1994) framework for ethnography is used to describe what is going on through the observation or reported inquiry (interviews), provide an analysis or description of how things are working, and interpret the meaning of the data. To build the basis for knowing, the researcher role is critical in ethnography of a culture (Creswell, 2005; Fetterman, 1989; Glense, 1999). Case study methodology is valuable when investigating organizational culture and a process of change (Creswell, 2005; Glesne, 1999; Yin, 2003). Case study interviews are the foundation of the understanding of the perceptions of the cultural shift description as subjects recall perceived changes.

This case was selected as an instrumental case, a unique case that illustrates a particular issue (Creswell, 2005), as it provides insight into the a transition of a division from one that previously did not have a division-wide use of assessment to one that is in the process of creating a culture of assessment. The data reviewed included a minimum of nine months of data from interviews, documentation, staff surveys, and meeting observations. This study utilized ethnographic methods in embedded case study (Yin, 2003) of LUU's SAD transition toward a

culture of assessment. The researcher's role is an important factor to understand the methods used.

About the researcher. The researcher worked at LUU in the student affairs division for seven years previously. Remaining in the same urban area and in a similar field, the researcher continued collegial and working relationships with staff at LUU through professional associations. However, the researcher was not a member of the staff as leadership transitions were taking place or during the study. This outsider and insider role allowed the researcher to be embedded in the culture and staff without direct reporting in the student affairs division. This is an important distinction to recognize, as findings from this study do not impact the researcher or her role at the LUU. This distance also allows for a clearer interpretation of events as described or seen without the lens of a member of the staff. However, the assumption of complete non-bias cannot be assumed. Member of the student affairs division have previous or current relationships with the researcher that may create assumptions about knowledge of the division, staff, and/or events. This creates an opportunity for misinterpretations or potential exclusion of some events in the transition of the culture shift.

Data Collection

The interview protocol was grounded in organizational culture and change literature, with direction from qualitative methods. The questions focused on the people within the student affairs division and their understanding of assessment and the processes. The interview protocol included a total of 16 questions based the literature and the author's student affairs experience. The protocol was revised and confirmed after an external review by a committee of education faculty and student affairs professionals.

Three of the questions were general; one introductory and two closing. One question asked to define assessment and recognize changes over time. Five questions were directed to the use of assessment at departmental and division-wide levels, while four questions were directed to the perception of assessment at those levels. Three questions centered on the understanding of assessment as a process from departmental and division-wide views. The interview concluded with open-ended opportunities to reflect on the interview and conversation to address any remaining thoughts.

Following institutional review board approval, 18 structured interviews were conducted during the month of May 2012 with key personnel from all the student affairs division

departments and divisional leadership. Interviewees signed informed consent forms and were interviewed under an hour. The interviewer took detailed notes during the audio-recorded interviews. Audio-recordings were used for validation on notes taken and select transcriptions. Data reported from the interviews did not use names of staff and limitations on content used were set; quotes that used departmental names and defining features were omitted to protect confidentiality.

Additional documents reviewed included departmental annual reports, emails to the assessment committee, assessment committee meetings, the assessment plans that departments developed, and division-wide communications on strategic planning. The investigator's attendance at the division's Assessment Committee meetings, division-wide meetings, and/or other meetings were instrumental in validating and processing themes from the interviews.

Data Analysis

The interviews were coded by question and theme for the final analysis. All transcribed data was member checked (Creswell, 2005; Glesne, 1999) for accuracy through email. The interview data was organized using thematic data analysis (Creswell, 2005). In this inductive process themes emerged to become the coding structure mapping any shared patterns, behaviors, and ways of thinking drawing on the interviewees understanding. The principal investigator performed all coding to ensure reliability in the themes charted. Connections drawn between the themes of the interviews, documentation, and meetings help create an understanding of the basis of the perceptions of cultural shift. Findings about the changes in perceptions resulting from SAD's process of moving toward assessment is included the next section.

Results

Assessment was perceived differently within the departments across the SAD at LUU at the time of the study than a year earlier. The themes of change in perception at the time of the study were that assessment was not to be feared; the student affairs division was contributing to the larger campus voice; assessment was a must have for departments; and good professionals use assessment.

Moving from Fear to Acceptance

There was a previous expression of concern or suspicion about assessment and the results of using assessment. A director with over 20 years tenure shared, "I think there might be some skepticism for some that there is a hidden agenda because of the past culture of the division."

Another subject with over 10 years in the division added, “prior perceptions about assessment from folks in general, before assessment became the hot topic, was, how is this going to be used, and is this going to be used against me if it doesn’t come out well?” Based on interview responses, a year prior to the study the perception of assessment was negative and feared. Assessment was perceived as a tool to eliminate programs and areas that were not demonstrating positive performance. Assessment was not transparent across departments.

Knowing the past concerns over how assessment was used under previous leadership a shift occurred in the perception. There was a clear division-wide transparency around assessment and the fear had moved toward acceptance. The same director with over 10 years in SAD discussed how assessment is perceived a year later.

I would say what we have seen thus far has been very palatable to all of us. I don’t think there’s any mistake. I think there’s been a great openness about the discussion of assessment. I don’t get the sense that there is a hidden agenda with assessment. Thus far, I think it’s been presented well, and it has been followed up well, and I don’t think anyone has this great fear of being on the street next year because of it.

The Student Affairs Division is Now “At the Table”

Based on conversations about changes that staff members were seeing, one important theme was the student affairs division as a critical player in student success at LUU. In the words of a subject, they have “a place at the table.” By being at the table, leadership within SAD was now asked to share information and contribute data at an institutional level in ways they had not done before. They were now a part of the measured success of students and it was clear to the staff that it was a win for the division. Assessment as a priority has confirmed a place at the table.

I think one of the factors is the new administration within Student Affairs. I think many of us, for the first time, within student affairs, are feeling that we have a place at the table. People are looking at us. People are realizing that we are a viable part of this campus, that we do influence students and a large number of students.

For a long time, the division of student affairs was not at the table. . . . They may have been at the table, but they weren’t eating. That whole thing has changed; to

anybody coming in, I would say I think we're getting the division to a point where I know the president values work that we do, and others, the provost and the CFO. You have to maintain those open and collaborative relationships in terms of your credibility within the division, or for the division, to represent the division.

These two subjects, respectively a department director and divisional leader, clearly perceived a change in how the division is now valued as part of the community. There is a change in how SAD staff perceived their role at the institution. The priority of assessment allowed them to feel that with their campus-wide seat they have a voice, and data to support SAD's contribution toward student success. The perception a year before the study was that SAD existed; the perception at the time of the study was SAD contributes.

“Nice to Have” is Now “Need to Have”

Previously perceptions among the staff were if you did use assessment, it was because it was nice to have, but not a necessity. There was a common sentiment that assessment was not going away; it is an active divisional priority. The staff in SAD is beginning to see assessment as a continuous part of the culture. One year prior to the study, the staff perception was that assessment was not on the radar. In the words of one subject,

it was a very threatening environment [a year ago] and I don't think assessment was really among the things that were their [the student affairs division administration's] top five priorities, top 10 priorities, assessment was probably not even on the radar for many people.

The perception at the time of the study was that the culture was changing to where assessment is increasing in importance toward providing evidence. Staff perceived assessment's added value to the departments in the decisions made as being supported by data. In the words of a newer department director:

I can speak to this transition, and the shift we're going through currently. That shift is significant in that, with our new administration, the expectation is that we will have data that drives all of our decisions. They're not telling us how we need to go about doing that, but the bottom-line is data should be informing all of our decisions.

The departments within the division are getting a message that everyone is shifting to a culture of assessment. This shift is more than rhetoric and is a result of an expectation of action

not simply “talking”. There is a clear shift in how the members of the division understand their role in assessment. Spoken by a long term department director:

I think the difference in the perspective now is that it’s very clear to everybody in our department that the expectation from upper administration is that we would follow through. I guess from that point, there is a shift in perspective, because now they know we don’t have a choice but to follow through, whereas in the past they talked about it, but then they didn’t do anything about it, so there was no implementation of an action plan or a follow through. I guess that would be the shift in perspective, is that there’s a very clear expectation, with mile markers and deadlines, and how we’re going to report this. We’re developing an assessment plan. I guess that would be the shift in perspective, is that now there are individuals, not just in the department, but up above, that we will be held accountable for this, and we will actually do this. I guess that’s where the shift in perspective is.

Being held accountable removes the perfunctory or superficial level of assessment. The understanding that assessment was the divisional culture was developing.

It could just simply be because there wasn’t a culture of assessment, there wasn’t a perceived need that we had to do it, because no matter what happens, someone way above is going to make a decision, so it doesn’t really matter whether we do it or not. I believe that what we’re saying as a division is, it does matter.

This direct quote came from a director with over 10 years tenure when asked to describe their understanding of this change. Assessment was perceived as a priority and a must have for each department in order to be seen as good professionals in SAD.

Redefining Professionalism in the Student Affairs Division

The dialogue during interviews created a sense that staff felt assessment cultures were everywhere else based on what they saw and heard nationally through conferences and associations. The perception was that assessment was not something departments in the student affairs division did in the years prior study regardless of the national focus they saw. Interestingly, because some departments have accreditation and certification their departmental cultures were one of assessment. Respondents often singled out specific departments and individuals that they knew utilized assessment as exemplars of culture of assessment. These

departments were often referred to as the model departments, good student affairs division professionals, or processes to emulate. Assessment disparities are perceived to be ending with the division-wide assessment plans.

According to a new divisional leader,

I think there are some departments within the division that are doing it more than others. I still think it's limited. I think that we're in the process of developing an understanding and expectation regarding assessment, within this next year, because assessment plans will be due. . . . This'll be the first time that they've actually had to submit a plan.

The understanding is that all departments will become equal and all staff will have the resources to be respected professionals in their fields.

The staff at most levels want to contribute to student success as outstanding SAD professionals. In reality, change was happening and perceptions were changing, but without action the trickle down of the importance of assessment was slow.

I don't think this department, in the past, has truly utilized assessment in the broader sense of the term. I think this department, and individual staff members have done program evaluations, and they've used that information to modify particular programs. But when I think about, from a departmental perspective, and are we focusing on assessment as a whole, incorporating program objectives and evaluations, learning outcomes, as well as our usage data and operational metrics and that type of thing, I don't think, holistically, this department has truly done that. That's the direction we're currently heading. We're trying to get a handle on, okay, what information do we have in place, and how has it been used? But really, how can we more intentionally look at everything, and start making decisions based on that data? I don't think that's been the case in reality.

This understanding that a new department director shared where departments as a whole must have assessment as a priority leads to the redefining of the outstanding SAD professional as one who uses assessment from the division-wide view.

Discussion of Results and Implications

Higher education scholars have found that the use of assessment can demonstrate student affairs' contributions toward student success (Bresciani et al. 2009b, Schuh & Upcraft, 2001). This case study addressed specifically how the student affairs division at a large, urban, Tier 1

research university began to use assessment to more accurately demonstrate their role in student success as a division-wide effort. The data provides other student affairs leaders with information that can help address questions surrounding staff perceptions of the process of making assessment a priority.

The perception of assessment for the student affairs division at LUU changed based on the data provided across the one-year timeframe examined in this study. Fears and suspicion from the staff were replaced with acceptance of the role assessment would have for the division and data-driven decision making was becoming a necessity. Case studies of Northern Arizona State and Isothermal Community College by Bresciani et al. (2009a) support that similar changes occurred in those institutions. In order to move from fear to acceptance, transparency, and communication across the division is required and for SAD at LUU it began with the discussion and required action at the highest levels of the division.

The current study also found a change in defining professionalism within student affairs to now include a utilization of assessment skills. The strategic planning for the University of Michigan's Student Affairs included the skills of assessment as part the change of culture for their institution (Taylor & Matney, 2007). Furthermore, the ACPA/NASPA Joint Task Force on Professional Competencies and Standards (2010) recognized that competent student affairs professions must possess skills in assessment, evaluation, and research;

The Assessment, Evaluation, and Research competency area (AER) focuses on the ability to use, design, conduct, and critique qualitative and quantitative AER analyses; to manage organizations using AER processes and the results obtained from them; and to shape the political and ethical climate surrounding AER processes and uses on campus. (p. 10)

Today, effective student affairs professionals need the key competency of assessment. Professionalism includes being engaged in professional development both local and national and connected to associations with the expectation of increasing professional competency.

The student affairs division at LUU was challenged by a pressured timeline to get assessment practices in departments while shifting the paradigm of student affairs professional's day-to-day job to include assessment. Assessment practices need to be understood as a norm for student affairs divisions and not an additional responsibility (ACPA/NASPA, 2010). Student

affairs professionals need to remain fluid and competencies and skills in assessment need to be continually developed.

This case study and those discussed by Bescianni et al. (2009a) are building an important foundation toward creating an understanding of creating a culture of assessment. Future work should look at empirical findings from multiple institutional perspectives (e.g. community colleges, small, urban, rural) to create a full understanding of how cultures of assessment are created. More research is needed to uncover how the day-to-day job duties of the student affairs professional are changing in order to incorporate assessment practices in the creation of a culture of assessment.

Although valuable information about the move toward an assessment culture was uncovered in this study, the findings are limited in generalizability. This study was not intended to be a step-by-step guide in creating a culture of assessment and a possible outcome for future research is a compilation of steps used in the process of creating a culture of assessment through multiple case study observations and interviews at campuses that differ from LUU. This study was limited in the time frame that was covered and a longer-term examination of the campus can provide a deeper understanding of the perceptions of the move toward assessment becoming a division-wide priority, and the pitfalls and achievements of such a process.

Conclusion

Opportunities for proving the contributions of divisions of student affairs toward the success of students on today's campus exist with the inclusion of assessment practices in the daily work of the student affairs professional. This study has contributed an understanding of how a student affairs division began to use assessment to more clearly demonstrate their role in student success at one university. This study supports that leadership and processes play a significant role in the transition toward a culture of assessment (Lakos & Phipps, 2004; Seagraves & Dean, 2010) and provide an understanding of the perceptions of the staff that may be similar to those from LUU. This line of inquiry establishes a foundation for future research to better understand how an increased focus on assessment is impacting today's student affairs professional.

References

- American College Personnel Association/National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Joint Task Force on Professional Competencies and Standards. (2010). *ACPA/NASPA professional competency areas for student affairs practitioners*. Retrieved from <http://www.naspa.org/about/boarddocs/710/competencies.pdf>
- Arum, R., & Roksa, J. (2010). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college: The four critical years revisited*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bresciani, M. J., Gardner, M. M., & Hickmott, J. (Eds.). (2009a). *Case studies for implementing assessment in student affairs* (New Directions for Student Services, No. 127). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bresciani, M. J., Gardner, M. M., & Hickmott, J. (2009b). *Demonstrating student success: A practical guide to outcomes-based assessment of student learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Chaffee, E. E., & Tierney, W. G. (1988). *Collegiate cultures and leadership strategies*. New York, NY: American Council on Education.
- Chaplot, P., Johnstone, R., & Booth, K. (2012). Building a culture of inquiry and using data effectively. *NASPA Leadership Exchange*, 10(3), 10-13.
- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Glesne, C. (1999). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Hughes, K. (2012). *The college completion agenda 2012 progress report*. Retrieved from College Board Advocacy & Policy Center website: http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/advocacy/cca/12b-6368_CCAProgressReport_WR.pdf
- Kuh, G. D., & Whitt, E. J. (2000). Culture in American colleges and universities. In M. C. Brown (Ed.), *Organization & governance in higher education: ASHE reader series* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Custom.
- Lakos, A., & Phipps, S. E. (2004). Creating a culture of assessment: A catalyst for organizational change. *Libraries and the Academy*, 4(3), 345-361.

- New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability. (2012). *Committing to quality: Guidelines for assessment and accountability*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Oburn, M. (2005). Building a culture of evidence in student affairs. In S. R. Helfgot & M. M. Culp (Eds.), *Community college student affairs: What really matters* (New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 131, pp. 19-32. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Olson, L., Smith, J., Murray, L., & Eckstein, H. (2012). The internal assessment academy: A tool for creating continual improvement in cocurricular areas. *NASPA Leadership Exchange*, 10(3), 19-22.
- Pettigrew, A. M. (1979). On studying organizational cultures. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(4), 570-581.
- Schein, E. H. (1999). *The corporate culture survival guide: Sense and nonsense about culture change*. San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass.
- Schuh, J. H. (Ed.). (2009). *Assessment methods for student affairs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schuh, J. H., & Upcraft, M. L. (2001). *Assessment practice in student affairs: An applications manual*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Seagraves, B., & Dean, L. A. (2010). Conditions supporting a culture of assessment in student affairs divisions at small colleges and universities. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 47(3), 307-324. doi:10.2202/1949-6605.6073
- Shutt, M. D., Garrett, J. M., Lynch, J. W., & Dean, L. A. (2012). An assessment model as best practice in student affairs. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 49(1), 65-82. doi:10.151/jsarp-2012-6227
- Sternberg, R. J., Penn, J., & Hawkins, C. (2011). *Assessing college student learning: Evaluation alternative models, using multiple methods*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Taylor, S. H., & Matney, M. M. (2007). Transforming student affairs strategic planning into tangible results. *NASPA Journal*, 44(1), 165-192.
- Wolcott, H. F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R. Y. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.